Ever Wish Jesus Had Just Kept His Mouth Shut?

Did you ever wish that Jesus had just kept His mouth shut? ("Yipes, Ray! That's sounds pretty sacrilegious!! You can't say stuff like that!") As genuine and faithful believers, that's right… *we should never say anything remotely like that!*

But many often *think* similar thoughts, consciously or subconsciously. One way we do that is when we simply ignore what Jesus said, and it's getting more are more common in today's harsh social and political climate.

Whether recognized or not, continued anger is one of the ways we ignore God's word. The net result is that by our actions (mental or physical) we are, in essence, *wishing* that God had not given us direct commands about our anger.

Same for revenge. A friend (maybe former friend) or even a family member pushes a political agenda we believe to be evil in God's eyes, and BOOM - no more relationship there. Recently someone told me that people with whom he had been friends now totally reject him because they did like the political sign he put in his yard. Somewhere between destroying his sign and no longer even speaking to one another, likes the strong implication that someone wished Jesus had just kept his mouth shut about love and hate.

The world is clearly recognizing the problem: I recently heard this joke, "If you want to save a lot of money on Christmas presents, just start a political argument over Thanksgiving dinner!" The obvious implication is that family relationships will be broken. I've seen such things happen and you probably have too.

But in Matthew 5:43-48, Jesus really did say,

> You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and *the* unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing *than others*? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Certainly, part of implication is that we don't have time to argue, *because God's will is that we show even our enemies that God loves them beyond all human comprehension!*

IF *you really want to say deeply in your heart, "I'm glad Jesus didn't keep His mouth shut," you might want to stop reading this now and read the whole context in Matthew 5:21-48.* I'll wait.
Did verse 48 scare you a bit? it scares me! "Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." It scares me enough to bother me almost daily. Jesus is strongly calling His followers to repent of their approach to their enemies.

If you really want your enemy to change, teach and exhibit Jesus' love, His mercy and His forgiveness. That is not only His command, but also far better than anger and loud, heated discussions. What if they don't change? Then revert to verses 44 and 45 "… love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.

OUCH! That's quite a challenge! But you *do* want to be a child of the Father? Right? Read verses 44 and 454 again. Hmmm… are you still sure that you *don't* wish Jesus had just kept His mouth shut?

Pray for His grace, to you and to others. Pray for your enemies. Politicians are *not* our main enemy. Sin is… theirs and ours. Hate the sin but love the sinner. You can do it! How do I know? Because God never gave us a command that we cannot accomplish. *Go for it! With His help, you got this!*

-Ray Wallace